

relationship between the Wing and Division had been evident from the first planning sessions in southern California, and the first socialization of the Opening Gambit plan was naturally with the Commander and Staff of the 3<sup>d</sup> MAW. On 28 December, the Wing and Division commanders, and their combined staffs, assembled at the 3<sup>d</sup> MAW headquarters at Al Jaber Air Base, Kuwait, and conducted a detailed review of the timing and objectives of the Opening Gambit. Members of the I MEF G-3 staff, including Colonel Larry Brown and Colonel Fred Milburn, attended to provide 'rudder guidance' from the MEF Commander's intent. This meeting proved to be a pivotal session in the transition of the Opening Gambit from the planning stage to execution. The respective staffs of the 3<sup>d</sup> MAW and the Division walked away from this session with a clear vision and execution guidance, able to immediately begin the detailed operational planning that made the Opening Gambit a success. This teamwork between Marines of each MSC began at the highest levels, and bred confidence and trust among the staffs. Eventually, the confidence shared between the Grunts and the Wingers was to prove a significant force multiplier in combat operations. Division planners were able to immediately begin the detailed operational planning which resulted in a 48-page execution matrix that spelled out in detail the movement of forces across the line of departure and the specific details on how the ground and air forces were to support operations that would make the Opening Gambit a success. The execution checklist described the sequence of events that had to take place, but made only indirect reference to event duration. Commanders would execute their tasks on the timelines allowed by the events on the ground.

The Division was invited to conduct a similar integrated planning session with the MEF Commander. The Division and Wing were confident of their ability to accomplish the MEF taskings. Now it was up to the MEF Commander to decide if the Opening Gambit met his guidance and intent. On 31 December 2002 the briefing was held at Camp Commando. With Colonel Toolan orchestrating the brief, Lieutenant Colonels Groen and Smythe presented the Opening Gambit in detail to the assembled Commanders of I MEF, 1<sup>st</sup> Marine Division, 3<sup>d</sup> MAW, 1<sup>st</sup> FSSG, MEG, and other elements of the MAGTF. Again, the plan received favorable reviews. With an approved attack plan in hand, the Division staff spent a quiet New Year's Eve in Camp Commando, preparing themselves for the transition from a paper plan to steel on target.

### **Getting the Force to the Fight**

In early December, Division representatives attended the MARCENT War Council in Bahrain. During this session, the fluid nature of planning efforts was noted, as certain basic decisions had not yet been made at higher levels. The Operation did not, as yet, have defined tactical objectives, force flow approval, authorization for reserve activation, or other supporting documentation, making the march to a detailed plan more dependent on assumptions than desired. It was clear to the Division that even if the detailed plans had not been approved at the highest levels, combat operations were going to take place in Iraq at some point in the near future. The Division lobbied for more aggressive force posturing in theater, and the beginning of the flow of Marine forces to join the significant Army forces that had already been deployed to Kuwait. This proved to be challenging for many, as some outside the operational chain were not universally convinced that combat operations would take place. These holdouts were hedging their support of the Division's preparation efforts with missions elsewhere in the world and in rhythm with peacetime measures of assignment and procurement. To the Division's good

fortune, MARCORSYSCOM, under Brigadier General Bill Catto, did not fall into this category. They continued to be the Division's strongest advocate for bringing proven capabilities on-line rapidly, and continued to move aggressively to equip the Division with the latest equipment that could be brought to theater and integrated prior to crossing the line of departure.

Previously, force flow planning had been based on a specific Operational Plan's (OPLAN) Time Phased Force Deployment Data (TPFDD). The careful force flow sequencing for this OPLAN had been updated over the course of the summer of 2002, providing a master script, written for a planned force flow sequence under a specific deployment scenario that included a defense of Kuwait. The Division deployment planners, under Lieutenant Colonel Clarke Lethin, had built the flexibility into this TPFDD that would allow for its adaptation to a new force flow sequence. By packaging the TPFDD by force packages consisting of RCTs, supporting arms, supporting logistics, and a slice of Division C2, the data was made flexible enough to be used in a variety of force flow scenarios. This foresight now proved invaluable as force flow planning took a new turn in December. Instead of deploying the planned TPFDD into theater, forces began to be approved incrementally under the Theater Combatant Commander's RFFs. The RFFs were centered on a desire for specific combat units, and often did not include the required supporting packages from the Division, Wing, and FSSG. Also, an ad hoc combination of modes of transportation would be required. The decision was made to get the MPSRONS in early, fly in the Marines, and use Fast Sealift Ships (FSS) to carry what would have been the Fly In Echelon equipment of the RCTs. What looked straightforward on paper would leave a trail of sleepless nights for logisticians and combat commanders from California to North Carolina to Kuwait City. The unfortunate consequence of a changed deployment strategy was the partial disruption of the carefully linked logistics, communications, fires, and maneuver packages that existed in the OPLAN TPFDD force flow. Under the RFF process, force flow was driven more by available lift, and much of the careful precision and integration that went into planning the TPFDD was lost. Marine embarkation planners now talked in terms of the 'Mother of all Deployment Orders' (MODEP), and the 'Son of MODEP' (SOMODEP), and scrambled to re-document their units force flow requirements for the new modes of transport. The impact of missing key enablers lost in the RFF process would be felt right through the combat phase, with drivers arriving after their vehicles were offloaded, and some CSS units arriving much later than required. Additionally, commanders and staffs focused inward on detailed embark plans at a time when the CG wanted them focused on the enemy and their tactical missions.

On 11 January, the President released the long anticipated Deployment Order, RFF-177. The Division's main body began deployment to Kuwait. With the flow of Marine forces approved, attention was turned to the task of moving more than 20,000 Division Marines and their equipment to theater. Preparing for their arrival was another significant challenge and the Division Forward CP immediately turned to the task.

### **Continuing Mission – Security in the Pacific**

Three of the Division's battalions were not included in the deployment roster to Kuwait, as they were required to fill the Division's responsibilities under the Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU) and Unit Deployment Programs (UDP). A fourth battalion from the Division was deployed to Kuwait as part of the 15<sup>th</sup> MEU. Supporting artillery, Light Armored

Reconnaissance (LAR), and Assault Amphibian support accompanied these battalions. Under the UDP, 2<sup>d</sup> Battalion, 4<sup>th</sup> Marines (2/4), Commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Andrew Schlaepfer; and 2<sup>d</sup> Battalion, 7<sup>th</sup> Marines (2/7), commanded by Lieutenant Colonel James Cameron, were deployed to Okinawa. As the planning continued from August 2002 through the end of the year, the status of these two battalions and their rotation was the subject of keen interest at MEF and Division levels. As with any potential major deployment, the disruption to unit rotation cycles under the UDP is significant. In this case, as the months rolled by without a deployment order to Kuwait, serious consideration had to be given to either leaving these units in place or replacing them with units from CONUS and sending them straight into combat. By Christmas Eve, the requirement to rapidly deploy the rest of the Division to Kuwait drove the decision to freeze UDP units in place. By this time, the advance parties from 2/4 and 2/7 had already returned to CONUS to coordinate the return of these units home. With the decision to leave these units in place in Okinawa, the advance parties returned to the Western Pacific, rejoining their comrades who braced for an extended rotation on the island, fulfilling the Division's responsibilities in the Pacific theater for the duration of Operation Iraqi Freedom. For these Marines, a six-month rotation to Okinawa stretched to a deployment of almost a year. Although disappointed at missing the combat action, these Marines recognized the role they played in stabilizing another important portion of the globe. With the war on terrorism in full swing, the efforts of these Marines were vital to the National effort and were never forgotten by their comrades in the Division.

In addition to these two battalions, the Division would also maintain its support to the Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU) program. The 2<sup>d</sup> Battalion, 1<sup>st</sup> Marines (2/1) would join the fight in Iraq, but as a Battalion Landing Team (BLT) under the command and control of the 15<sup>th</sup> MEU. The 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, 1<sup>st</sup> Marines (1/1) would remain in Camp Pendleton, completing the workup cycle for the 13<sup>th</sup> MEU rotation. The 3<sup>d</sup> Battalion, 1<sup>st</sup> Marines would return from its own 11<sup>th</sup> MEU assignment, and be turned around in 30 days to redeploy with RCT-1. The Division's responsibilities across large segments of the globe precluded all elements of the Division from participation in ground combat in Iraq. As part of the MEU and UDP programs, each of these battalions would remain a vital part of the Nation's war on terrorism, and accomplished their assigned missions with pride and professionalism. Between the UDP and the MEU programs, a full four infantry battalions were unavailable for combat when the Division was called.

In order to provide sufficient infantry for the Division's impending mission in Iraq, 2d Battalion, 23<sup>d</sup> Marines was reactivated. This battalion had already served on active duty for nine months as a post 9-11 domestic US Quick Reaction Force (QRF). Added to RCT-1's troop list, it brought that regiment to full strength. Motivated and well-trained, the 2/23 Marines and Sailors reported back to active duty only weeks after returning to civilian life without a murmur of discontent. These Marines truly lived up to the highest standards, and their later combat contributions would be remarkable.

### **Creation of the Division Administrative Center**

In early January 2003, Gunnery Sergeant Marco Rico of the Division G-1 did an administrative assessment of the personnel receiving process in Kuwait. He realized that Marines in theater would need more than just accountability, they would need Reporting Unit

Code (RUC)-level administrative assistance for pay, promotions, unit diary assistance, legal assistance, emergency leave, and other administrative support far beyond the capabilities of the small staff currently located forward. Before the rest of the Division arrived in Kuwait, an administrative structure needed to be in place. On 30 January, Lieutenant Colonel Powalski and a small administrative team departed Camp Pendleton to set up a Division Administration Center (DAC) at Commando Camp in Kuwait. The DAC, comprised of administrators from each RCT, would handle the bulk of administrative matters in concert with 'reachback' administrative support to assist every Marine within the 1<sup>st</sup> Marine Division. Unit administrators from the RCTs would be co-located, but not consolidated. Using this unique arrangement, unit integrity and administrative processes consistent with the guidance of their immediate Commanding Officers would stay intact, but all of the administration Marines would benefit from their mutual experience and shared workspace in case of a requirement to surge in support of a crisis situation. The various unit representatives would work together on several issues to meet a common goal, 100% personnel accountability and administrative support for all Marines attached to 1<sup>st</sup> Marine Division, to include attachments from the Army's 1<sup>st</sup> Field Artillery, 2<sup>d</sup> Marine Division units, 4<sup>th</sup> Marine Division units, and individual augments. Equipment shortages, especially for computer and communications assets, proved critical shortfalls during the first few weeks of the DAC's operation, as this equipment arrived later in the force flow. The DAC found a stable work area using space gladly donated by the MEF G-2. With the assistance of their fellow Marines, and by the exceptional efforts of the Division G-6, the G-1 ensured that the DAC had communication capabilities consistent with their needs. 'Reach Back' and 'Push Forward' administration became a concerted effort daily between the G-1 Marines in Iraq, Kuwait and California. The CG's vision of warfighting units having only a small administrative staff as they moved forward (with the majority of administrative work completed in the Division Support Area) was achieved.

### **“Sappers Up” – Combat Engineers Organize For Combat**

Operation Iraqi Freedom would see something different when it came to Combat Engineers. Forward thinking engineers started with a fresh sheet of paper as they figured out the best way to organize engineer support for the Division. The Marine Corps would combine both 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>d</sup> Combat Engineer Battalions (CEBs) into a single 'Engineer Battalion'. Contingency planning between 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>d</sup> Combat Engineer Battalion (the two active duty battalions) and 4<sup>th</sup> Combat Engineer Battalion (the reserve combat engineer battalion) had begun to take shape in October 2002. The Engineer battalion commanders jointly recommended merging battalion staffs, and providing reinforced line companies directly to the RCTs to give the fighting units an immediate and robust combat engineer capability. After presenting this course of action to the Commanding General of 1<sup>st</sup> Marine Division, Lieutenant Colonel Paul Cyr, the commanding officer of 1<sup>st</sup> CEB, was selected to be the CG's principal engineering advisor as the Division Engineer, while Lieutenant Colonel Mike Micucci, the commanding officer of 2<sup>d</sup> CEB, would actually command the combined combat engineer battalion.

All agreed that this organization would provide unity of command, best support the RCTs, place the majority of the Division's engineer capability forward, and at the same time retain a sizeable engineer capability still in general support of the division. The engineer support companies held in general support of the division could be used to reinforce one or more RCTs

with additional breaching capabilities, be used in Military Operations in Urban Terrain (MOUT), assist in cutting expedient combat roads and trails, or provide survivability or other combat support. In addition, engineer sections would be provided to 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>d</sup> LAR Battalions and 1<sup>st</sup> Reconnaissance Battalion to assist in bridge classification, performing obstacle and minefield reconnaissance, and other combat engineer support. Engineer support company detachments reinforcing the RCTs would include at least six M9 Armored Combat Earthmovers (ACE), two or more bulldozers, three dump trucks, armored HMMWVs, a maintenance contact vehicle, and the operators and mechanics required to provide ample support.

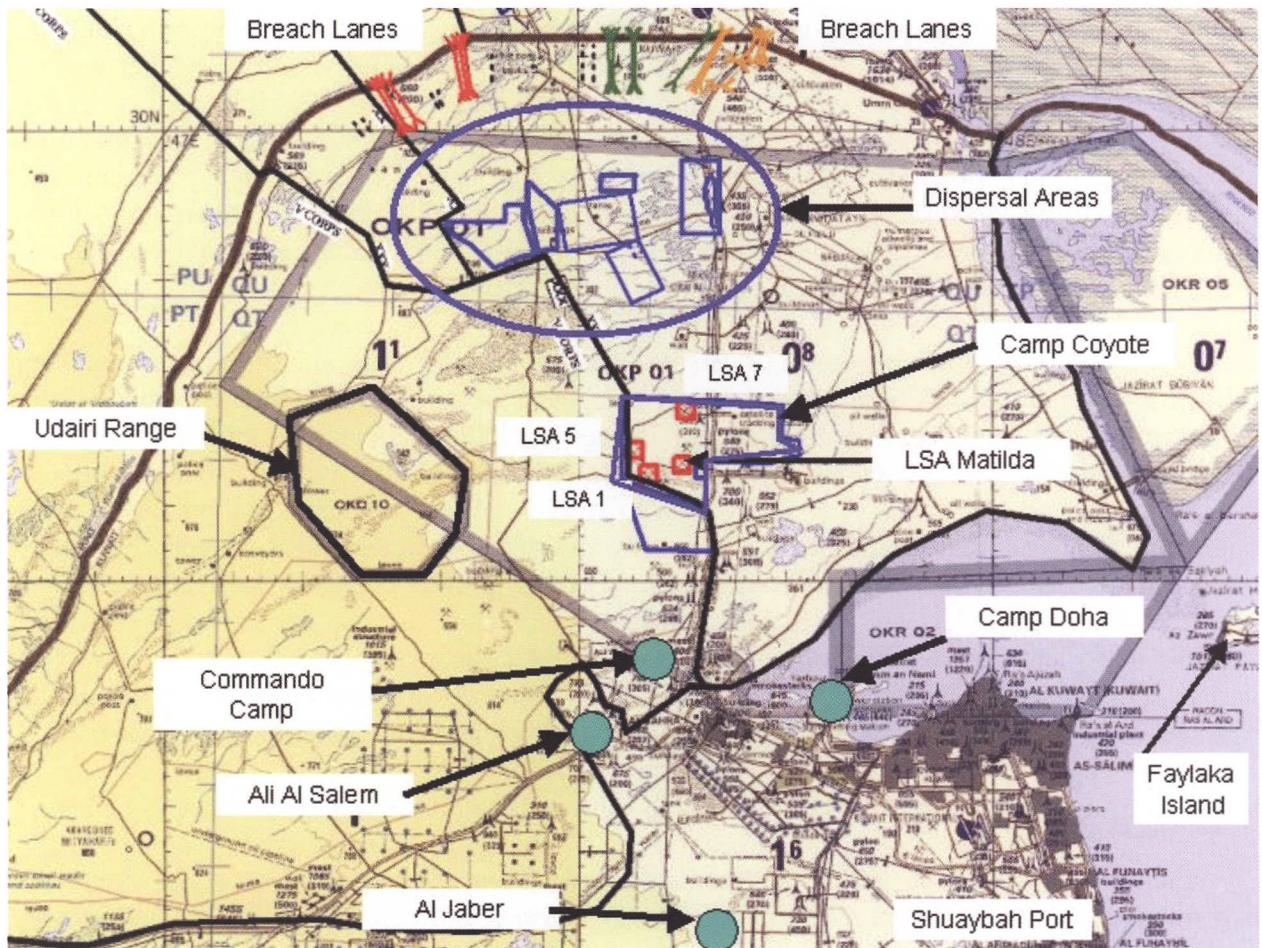
By mid-February 2002, all the engineers were deployed to Kuwait, and their equipment soon followed. 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>d</sup> CEB completed their merger, and a new personnel structure emerged that would run the combined command. The combat engineer letter companies from both CEBs were attached to the RCTs. C Company, 2<sup>d</sup> CEB went to RCT-1; B Company, 1<sup>st</sup> CEB went to RCT-5; and both C and D Company, 1<sup>st</sup> CEB went to RCT-7. The Engineer Battalion would retain one combined Headquarters and Service Company and two separate engineer support companies, one from each of 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>d</sup> CEB. Throughout February, CEB created a staff that would be divided between CEB forward command post, main command post, and combat train. Having a forward and main command post would allow the battalion to echelon forward and support varied and potentially independent missions. By 10 March, all sealift ships supporting the engineers had arrived, and the combined battalion had sufficient equipment to be combat-ready.

### **Building a Home for the Division in Kuwait – Camp Matilda**

When the Forward CP staff arrived in Kuwait, the expanse of desert that would eventually become home to the Division's more than 20,000 Marines and Sailors (as well as the growing number of Soldiers that had joined the Division's ranks in a variety of combat specialties) was bare ground and blowing sands. The forward Division Engineer, Major Dan Longwell, had begun the terrain management planning in late summer of 2002, but it had not progressed past circles drawn on a map by the time the Division Forward CP arrived in country. Raising the camps would require a significant outlay of funds, and making this commitment was a large step with strategic overtones. Over the course of three months, the plan for Tactical Assembly Area (TAA) Coyote would mature into four Life Support Areas (LSAs) that provided food, shelter, shower, and sanitation facilities to units as they arrived in country. The Division's LSAs were collectively referred to as 'Camp Matilda'.

The transition was not without challenge. Competing demands, conflicting priorities, terrain management issues, and bad weather all conspired to slow LSA (Logistical Support Area) construction. The demands of building camps of sufficient size, and the lack of assets readily available in Kuwait to accomplish the construction made this a challenge. In the end, a handful of Marines were successful in applying the social energy and sweat equity needed to give the Division a home. In days, reminiscent of the 1<sup>st</sup> Marine Division's training in Australia during World War II, the Division began to establish itself at Camp ('Waltzing') Matilda in Kuwait for final combat staging and rehearsal.





*Camp Coyote in central Kuwait was the home of the Division prior to crossing the Line of Departure. It was near the Udairi training range complex, and the Division's planned Dispersal Areas*

The area easily met the Division's needs for training ranges, living areas, and storage space. Driven by the likelihood that units would arrive in Kuwait and could immediately step off into the attack, the Commanding General's intent was to live as austere as possible during the short time period that units would be there. In November, the plan consisted of circles drawn on a map within TAA-Coyote and unit names assigned to the circles. A reconnaissance on the ground of the circles drawn on the map resulted in a modified plan. Coyote was not a vacant stretch of land as suggested by CFLCC, but contained garrison and training areas of the Kuwaiti Land Forces (KLF), as well as a large number of Bedouins.

In December, CFLCC released a directive establishing a common living standard for all forces in Kuwait. The impact to Army forces was minimal, since they billeted in established camps that easily met the new quality of life standard. For the Division, however, this was a fundamental shift. The austere TAA that would support units for a short while before crossing the line of departure were upgraded into a more permanent LSA requiring significantly greater engineering efforts and financial expenditure than previously planned. The staff commenced planning to respond to the change. Colonel Toolan and Lieutenant Colonel Broadmeadow joined Major Longwell in assessing and prioritizing the Division's requirements.

Four carefully considered large cantonment areas replaced the circles hastily drawn in the initial plan. The Commanding General's intent remained tactically focused, and no LSA would have the elaborate berming or wire obstacles associated with a defensive mindset. LSA development anticipated the flow of Division forces into theater, so LSA-Ripper, supporting RCT-7, would be the first LSA to be completed. LSA-Matilda would be built next for the Division Headquarters Battalion, 11<sup>th</sup> Marines, and separate battalions. This was followed by the development of LSA Grizzly for RCT-5, and (eventually) LSA Inchon for RCT-1. In keeping with the CFLCC's intent, the Division planned for tents with decking for billeting; electricity for work and living spaces; showers, portable chemical toilets and dumpsters for hygiene maintenance; kitchen areas for preparation of hot meals; and gravel laid on main routes throughout the camps to keep down the dust. Similar initiatives began within the MEF's other MSCs, including the recently joined 1<sup>st</sup> UK Division and the 15<sup>th</sup> MEU (SOC). The re-allotment of real estate within TAA-Coyote was conducted at strongly argued meetings. In the end, the 1<sup>st</sup> UK Division and 15<sup>th</sup> MEU (SOC) set up near the camp of the 6<sup>th</sup> Kuwaiti Brigade, east of Highway 80. The FSSG set up south of the Kuwaiti brigade, east of Highway 80, while the Division maintained the areas west of Highway 80.

The Kuwaiti Ministry of Defense (MOD), and Ministry of the Interior (MOI) were fully supportive of the Division and endeavored to help wherever possible. But as it is in most large bureaucracies, decisions at the top are not rapidly or completely disseminated down to the execution level. Cutting the berm that runs from the border with Iraq and down Highway 80 to make entrances into the LSAs was such an instance. On two occasions, contractors cut the berm into the LSAs only to be stopped by local MOD officials who not only halted their work, but also made them restore the berm to its original condition. Lacking a translator, Major Longwell could only rely on a document written by CFLCC in English on one side and Arabic on the reverse explaining what he was trying to do. Similar situations arose when MOD officials asked for and then confiscated third country nationals' passports (most of the contract workers were not Kuwaitis.) Major Longwell spent several nights at MOD Headquarters at Ali As Salem retrieving workers' documents so they could return to work. Once the information and language obstacles had been breached, MOD and MOI personnel were obliging and enabled work to continue



*Life Support Area Matilda was one of four Life Support Areas the Division occupied while in central Kuwait.*

From the signing of the first contract to the first Marine arriving at LSA-7, contractors had only two weeks to show results. There was plenty of competition for scant contractor resources from among the FSSG, TF Tarawa, and other camps. While one of the sub-contractors began the task of road improvement, numerous others began construction of decking, erection of tents, installation of electrical generators and showers, and limited berming around the LSAs. In an assembly line fashion, as one project was completed at one LSA, that subcontractor moved to the next LSA in



priority and began the process again. The net effect was simultaneous development of the first three LSAs by multiple sub-contractors under the direction of the Division Engineer. The MPF offload added further pressure to the situation since the Arrival and Assembly Operations Echelon (AAOE) area had to be set up in the desert near the LSAs in order to receive the units' equipment and prepare it for combat. Available funding was severely strained, and work-arounds were required. LSA-1 was developed to house RCT-1 but relied on habitability suites for amenities and LSA-5's showers and chow hall. Soon, MSE representatives were flown in to supervise the completion of their own LSAs. 4-5 Marine teams began arriving around 1 February and provided the link between the contractors and the using unit. For their part, contractors completed portions of LSAs just as Marines scheduled to occupy them arrived. Final improvements to the route leading to the AAOE area wrapped up as the first truck from the offload rolled up to the gate.

In each LSA, commanders had 60 large tents for billeting Marines, 22 medium tents for billeting SNCOs and Officers, and 22 smaller tents for other billeting. 15 shower units, 200 portable chemical toilets, 5 generators, 50 dumpsters, and 1 food preparation area completed each facility. Marines would have to transit to the Udairi Range Complex to fire large caliber weapons but found room within the TAA to fire small caliber weapons.

### **Embarkation, Deployment, and Off-load Operations**

The ability to get to the fight is a critical element of combat power, and the ability to get a Marine Division across the globe and into a fight quickly is one of the Nation's most remarkable capabilities. Critical to all was the adaptation and flexibility displayed by the MEF and its components in the reception, staging, onward movement and integration of all RFF forces. Without the benefit of a mature theater logistical command and without sufficient transportation assets, the components (including the Division with its Forward CP) refocused efforts to bring these forces in. The Forward CP established convoy security teams, airfield reception teams, surge drivers for all MPS assets and much more in order to receive and stage personnel and equipment. The Division staff focused on sequencing the right forces with the right gear into theater, while the units of the Division focused on packaging, weighing, and marking their



*MPF stern offload of an AAV at ports in Kuwait. The preponderance of Division equipment was transported by ship.*



*Air Force C-5 loading at March Air Reserve Base, California. Many Marines and some equipment were transported overseas to Kuwait by strategic air.*



equipment. Conducting strategic mobility exercises in the fall of 2002 was a means to bring the two efforts together to assess how ready units were to respond to a deployment order. The Assistant Division Commander (ADC), Colonel John Kelly, and the Deputy G-3, Lieutenant Colonel Clarke Lethin, became intimately involved in the embarkation preparation of the Division, lending focused urgency to the process. Through unit briefs they injected discipline into the embarkation process and ensured unit plans reflected the nature of the fight the Division was about to undertake – light, lean, lethal – down to the pallet-load. Units laid equipment out on parade decks in stick order, weighed loads, and measured vehicles. Because of the flexible nature of RFF deployment, the units had to do double duty to ensure their equipment would fit on either ships or aircraft (as the means of deployment was not certain.) When DEPORD 177A was released in January, deployment planning and preparation was validated as the Division departed home stations for Kuwait. Time spent planning and inspecting Unit Line Number (ULN) serials during the previous months paid off in speed and flexibility of deployment when the Division deployed by RFF instead of by the timeline of the TPFDD.

Deploying the force by a combination of military and civilian modes of transport proved challenging. In January, ships from all three MPSRONs sortied to the CENTCOM AOR to provide the first suites of Marine equipment. U.S. Navy Amphibians, Fast Sealift Ships (FSS), and contracted civilian carriers followed to provide additional capability. The majority of the Division's Marines and sailors flew on commercial aircraft of the Civil Reserve Air Fleet (CRAF) while high-value organic equipment flew on military transports. RCT-1 steamed out of San Diego harbor aboard amphibious ships as part of Amphibious Task Force - West (ATF-West).

In early January, groups of Marines headed to the Indian Ocean, the Mediterranean Sea and Kuwait to start the MPSRON offload process. Offload Preparation Party (OPP) Marines linked up with MPSRON ships in Diego Garcia and Sigonella, Italy to check equipment. They ensured gear was ready to drive down the ramp when the ships docked in Kuwait. Survey, Liaison, and Reconnaissance Party (SLRP) Marines flew into Kuwait to ensure Ash Shuaybah Port and the Kuwait Naval Base (the two ports of debarkation) were ready to receive ships, and Kuwait City International Airport was ready to receive military aircraft. On 17 January, the advance party of CSSG-11 arrived in Kuwait to support the large MPF offload. In total, eleven ships with over 5,000 pieces of rolling stock and 7,500 of containers were offloaded. Augmented by convoys from CSSB-10, CSSC-115, and CSSC-117, the eleven-ship offload was completed in 40 days, two weeks ahead of schedule.

Division logisticians worked hard to expedite the deployment. The Deputy G-4, Lieutenant Colonel Jeff Horigan, designed and stood up the Division Operations Center (DOC) at Camp Pendleton. The DOC became the clearinghouse for force flow information and the link to ongoing operations in theater. At the unit level, Major Carl Small and the Division Embarkation team did yeoman's work assisting deploying units in reordering and reconfiguring their information. From data entry to assistance at the Sea and Aerial Ports of Embarkation (S/APOE), Major Small's team maximized available lift to allow the Division to close into theater as quickly as possible. At Kuwait City International Airport, Gunnery Sergeant Manuel Johnson became the single point of contact to receive Division units and marry them up with transportation for movement to their LSAs. Gunnery Sergeant Johnson was one of a number of

unsung heroes who scrambled to move mountains of equipment and thousands of vehicles off the ships and into the hands of the warriors who needed them.

The 7<sup>th</sup> Marine Regiment was the first Division unit to deploy. As the primary Maritime Prepositioned Force (MPF) GCE, they planned to link-up with the gear being offloaded from the MPSRONS. 7<sup>th</sup> Marines had conducted numerous exercises and inspections to be able to quickly leave Twenty-nine Palms, fly to an operating area, and marry up with assets from MPF shipping. In the weeks following 9-11, 7<sup>th</sup> Marines had conducted a two-ship MPF offload during exercise Bright Star in Egypt. During the second week of January, the advanced party of 7<sup>th</sup> Marines arrived and prepared to offload equipment from the ships of MPSRONS 2 and 3, which had closed on Kuwait. The first two ships – Motor Vessels (*MV*) *Hauge* and *Lopez* – arrived on 15 January before the Survey, Liaison, and Reconnaissance Party (SLRP) had arrived. With typical can-do spirit, Colonel Toolan assigned Major Andrew Petrucci (the 7<sup>th</sup> Marines planning liaison officer to the Division Forward in Kuwait) to the task. With a pickup team of only 15 Marines, Major Petrucci organized the offload and staging of RCT-7's equipment with a makeshift Arrival and Assembly Operations Element. There was nowhere near the full complement of drivers needed to offload the vehicles, either from the ships or from the flatbed trailers on which they arrived at their desert staging areas. Marines from the Division Forward CP responded to the call for drivers and were quickly bussed down to the port to assist. 'Cooks, bakers, and candlestick makers' were all drafted into service to drive Amtracks, MTVRs, and HMMWVs all over Kuwait. On 20 January, the draftee drivers were returned to Camp Commando when the remainder of the shore party arrived. By 24 January, 7<sup>th</sup> Marines added equipment from the *MV* *Anderson* and US Naval Ship (*USNS*) *Stockham*. The first main body battalions arrived by air on 24 January. The Marines of 3<sup>d</sup> Battalion, 11<sup>th</sup> Marines, 1<sup>st</sup> Tank Battalion, 3<sup>d</sup> LAR Battalion, 1<sup>st</sup> Combat Engineer Battalion, and 3<sup>d</sup> AA Battalion that combined with 7<sup>th</sup> Marines to form RCT-7 soon followed. By the time the *MV* *Button* and *MV* *Bonnyman* completed offload on 27 January, the bulk of the combat power of RCT-7 was in Theater. On 1 February, Colonel Hummer told the ADC that RCT-7 had closed the force. It took only two weeks to go from garrison locations to a combat ready RCT in LSA-7.

The deployment that started as a single RCT in Kuwait, quickly grew to add a second RCT, and eventually included the entire Division. Fifth Marine Regiment was the next to go. Without an MPF-focus in daily operations, 5<sup>th</sup> Marines relied on intensive educational seminars and strong leadership to successfully get up to speed on MPF operations. The Marines of Grizzly had taken a crash-course in MPF operations from their comrades in 7<sup>th</sup> Marines. This training included a visit to the Blount Island Command, where first hand information on the contents and offload procedures for specific ships was gained. Chief Warrant Officer Brian Spooner led the 75 Marines from the regimental OPP to Kuwait to accomplish the download of MPSRON-1. Their first elements departed Camp San Mateo in late January and joined the Division in Kuwait. *MV* *Pless* and *MV* *Kocak* brought in the first loads of what would be over 17,000 items of equipment offloaded for RCT-5's use in combat. Working closely with the shore party, the OPP downloaded the *MV* *Obregon* and *USNS* *Martin* ahead of schedule, finishing up with the *MV* *Bobo*. They received other units from Camp Pendleton, Twenty-nine Palms, and Camp Lejeune to eventually form RCT-5. By 15 February, RCT-5 was staged with elements of 2<sup>d</sup> Tank Battalion, 1<sup>st</sup> LAR Battalion, 1<sup>st</sup> CEB, and 3<sup>d</sup> AA Battalion. The RCT had gone from garrison to

assembly areas in Kuwait in weeks, and, with their brethren in RCT-1 and RCT-7, would go on to write Marine Corps history in Baghdad a few weeks later.

RCT-1 prepared to load seven amphibious ships that would take them half way around the world as RCT-5 and RCT-7 prepared to fly in and link up with MPF. With the release of a naval message on 6 January, Amphibious Task Force (ATF) West was created. In addition to the equipment of RCT-1, 1<sup>st</sup> LAR Battalion loaded all but one company of its LAVs and equipment on the amphibious ships (1<sup>st</sup> LAR received one company's worth of LAVs from MPSRON shipping, but was required to ship the rest of the battalion from Camp Pendleton.) Marines staged equipment at Naval Station San



*Marines from 1/4 conduct live fire training aboard the USS Boxer. The long transit gave RCT-1 time to build habitual relationships between its organic units and supporting attachments.*

Diego and the National City commercial port. Onload of the *USS Bonhomme Richard*, *USS Boxer*, *USS Cleveland*, and *USS Comstock* began on 10 January. With the assistance of the ATF West Embark Officer, Chief Warrant Officer Mark Ivy, the *Cleveland* and *Comstock* were loaded in two days. Division Marines, ship's crew, and Navy staff began loading the next ship before the last was finished. The *Pearl Harbor*, *Anchorage*, and *Dubuque* loaded simultaneously, all finishing at the same time as the *Boxer* and *Bonhomme Richard*. ATF West pulled away from the pier on 17 January as families waved and news crews filmed. During transit, the RCT-1 Marines continued their combat conditioning by conducting innovative training that optimized the available space onboard ship. The RCT conducted daily communications exercises among the units onboard the various ships of the ATF to improve the regiment's radio and data connectivity reliability. Several commanders' conferences were conducted to refine ashore training schedules, combat procedures, and image the leadership through the initial actions of the Opening Gambit. Reversing the training cycle, 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, 4<sup>th</sup> Marines (1/4) conducted the majority of their live fire, weapons handling, NBC, and physical conditioning training at night. The Marines and Sailors from Weapons Company, 1/4 instructed the Marines from CSSC-111 on weapons handling, individual protective measures, and other essential combat skills. Their transit would take over a month and include major mechanical problems with the *Bonhomme Richard* that delayed its arrival. Commodore Rome and his Sailors lived up to the great reputation they had with their Marine brothers. These hard-working, mission-oriented Sailors got their ships to Kuwait despite many challenges. On 25 February, the first ships pulled pierside at the Kuwait Naval Base and began to offload. In four days the offload was complete, and by 1 March RCT-1 stood combat ready at LSA-1.

Eleventh Marine Regiment and Headquarters Battalion faced unique challenges throughout the deployment. As the unit responsible for providing artillery support to the maneuver elements, 11<sup>th</sup> Marines had elements traveling by both air and amphibious shipping, and would marry up with MPF equipment once there. Deployed by both air and sea, the regiment was equipped with a combination of MPF and organic equipment. In Kuwait, the regiment gained (from 10<sup>th</sup> Marines) a Counter Battery Radar (CBR) Detachment (two Q46A Firefinder radars, a Target Processing Center (TPC), and 23 Marines) and two cannon batteries (India 3/10 and Romeo 5/10). Additionally, it attached the 1st Field Artillery Detachment (1st FAD) from the U.S. Army XVIII Airborne Corps in Fort Bragg, North Carolina (two Q-37 radars, a TPC, and 24 soldiers.) By 13 March, Colonel Marletto informed the CG that 11<sup>th</sup> Marines had their full complement of howitzers and counter-battery radars ready for the fight.

For Headquarters Battalion, the challenge lay in maintaining sufficient staffs in CONUS and Kuwait to command and control units in both locations. As February drew to a close, Headquarters Battalion re-organized to provide truck detachments to each of the RCTs. Following this redistribution, they were fully staffed for combat operations. The *Soderman* completed download on 13 March and provided the remaining assets the Division needed in the fight to Baghdad. It was the last of four FSS and seven contracted commercial ships that enabled the force to close.

In Kuwait, the RSO&I tracking responsibilities fell to Corporal Justin Duplain, who kept the Forward staff informed about the progress of the TPFDD and arriving forces. His duties included identifying force flow discrepancies, and communicating this to the DOC at Camp Pendleton. Corporal Duplain's additional duties included briefing the CG on the daily progress of RSO&I during staff meetings, as well as serving as the Forward CP's Plans Chief. Considering the rank of individuals on parallel staffs with similar responsibilities, his weighty responsibilities were testament to the trust and confidence that the CG put in the young Marine NCOs who turned plans and ideas into action on the battlefield. Once, when the good Corporal had missed a few staff meetings because of demanding duties, the CG asked where he had been. Without skipping a beat, Corporal Duplain answered, "Well, I've been too busy to brief you General!" He was, and the CG knew it.

### **Fires Planning**

As the Commander of 11<sup>th</sup> Marines, Colonel Marletto was also the Division Fires Support Coordinator. Going into this operation, Colonel Marletto's guidance to his staff and subordinate commanders was simple: "We must mass to kill the enemy at every opportunity, no pinpricks." His intent was equally succinct, and left no doubt with anyone, regardless of rank, as to the 11<sup>th</sup> Marines purpose, which was to "Protect the Marines and sailors of the 1<sup>st</sup> Marine Division from the effects of enemy indirect fire systems." These straightforward words resonated throughout the 11<sup>th</sup> Marines and were backed up by the regiment's actions during the attacks from northern Kuwait to Al Kut, Baghdad, and Tikrit.

The members of the G-3 Fires cell that deployed with the Forward CP possessed a breadth and depth of fire support expertise that represented the Division's commitment to the philosophy that fire support is enabled by building partnerships. Lieutenant Colonel (USA) Gary Smythe,



the Assistant Division Fire Support Coordinator led the team. For an Army Officer, the Marines of the Division thought Lieutenant Colonel Smythe was all right. He was the single Division officer with the 1<sup>st</sup> Marine Division patch on his shoulder, and he carried the serious Fire Support Coordination responsibilities on his shoulders as well. The Division Target Information Officer (TIO) was Chief Warrant Officer Quint Avenetti, a targeting expert. He was the first 0803 Target Acquisition Officer to be assigned to the 11<sup>th</sup> Marines Fire Support Coordination Section since the Marine Corps restructured the 0803 Military Occupational Specialty career path. The decision to place greater experience and technical expertise in the TIO billet was deliberate, and recognized the importance of the relationship between intelligence and fires. The team was soon joined by Master Sergeant Brad Lee, the Division Observer Liaison Chief, whose years of fire support experience and knowledge of automated systems would be critical. The Division's Air Officers rounded out the Fires team, with Lieutenant Colonel "Iron" Shank, Major "Grams" Gramuglia, and Captain "Benny" Bennigson. Both "Grams" and "Benny," who had each been with the Division for over two years, had earned the trust and respect of their comrades over the months of preparation that had already gone into this fight. These Marines had demonstrated a thorough knowledge and tactically focused mindset that made them superior in their billets. Iron's arrival in late 2002 brought another solid member to the team.

The Marines of the Forward Fires team seized the opportunity afforded by the CFLCC exercises to test the Division's fire support communications nets and automated fire support coordination systems. They continued this training during a Division Forward CPX and displacement exercise held in the third week of December. While AFATDS and its companion PC-based software, Effects Management Tool (EMT) were a focus of training, the Marines also received instruction by the MEF Information Management Officer (IMO) and contractors in the use of Command and Control Personal Computer (C2PC) and Automated Deep Operations Coordination System (ADOCS). Although not a system of record, ADOCS was used extensively within CENTCOM to automate the deliberate and reactive targeting processes. This would be the first war in which fire support coordination was largely digital, and many lessons would be derived from the experience.

In addition to planning and coordination, the Fires cell was equipped to conduct artillery reconnaissance and survey. At the request of Lieutenant Colonel Phil Lark, the I MEF Force Fires Plans Officer, Lieutenant Colonel Smythe and his team conducted an artillery reconnaissance of Kuwait's Bubiyan Island on 27 December, to determine whether artillery could be feasibly positioned there in support of an assault on the Al Faw Peninsula (as artillery on Bubiyan could range across the narrow Khor al Abdulla waterway separating Kuwait from Iraq.) The Royal Marines planned to conduct the assault early in the campaign, and Brigadier Gregory, Chief of Royal Artillery, and Commanding General of the 1<sup>st</sup> UK Armoured Division's Offensive Support Group (OSG), accompanied the team. They surveyed Bubiyan Island from the shore to 35 km inland and confirmed the suitability of the single bridge to the island for heavy vehicles and towed artillery. The team determined that the only suitable firing positions from which to support an assault were the Kuwaiti coastal defense artillery positions. Located at approximately 2 km intervals along the marshy northern shore of the island, each of the built up positions could accommodate a battery of howitzers. This venture marked the beginning of collaboration between the Brit gunners and the Cannon Cockers of 11<sup>th</sup> Marines, which would be to the advantage of both during the war.

## Continuing Collaboration with UK 1<sup>st</sup> Division



*UK headquarters and planning elements arrive at Camp Matilda.*

The 1<sup>st</sup> Marine Division and the UK's 1<sup>st</sup> Armoured Division planners met a few days later to work out a detailed plan for the Relief in Place (RIP). The swift RIP of the Al Basrah area would be critical to sustaining the momentum of the attack. By this time, the planners expected A-day sometime during the first week of March, and the British planners were counting on the arrival of the 7<sup>th</sup> Armoured Brigade in time for LD. It was agreed that the relief would be conducted from east to west, beginning with RCT-7 and the 7<sup>th</sup> Armoured Brigade in the Az Zubayr area. This was to be followed by RCT-5 and 16<sup>th</sup> Air Assault Brigade around the GOSPs. To facilitate close coordination, the UK 1<sup>st</sup>

Division's tactical command post would co-locate with the 1<sup>st</sup> Marine Division Forward CP for the assault. In addition, a Royal Air Force Liaison Officer from the RAF Regiment supporting the 1<sup>st</sup> UK Division would move forward with MWSG-37 to assume control of the FARP site at Safwan Airfield.

The plan for the relief of artillery would remain fluid almost up to G-day. At the time of the RIP coordination meeting, the British planners believed that only two batteries of the 3<sup>d</sup> Royal Horse Artillery (3 RHA) would be ready by G-day, and both would initially be required to support 3<sup>d</sup> Commando's assaults on the Al Faw Peninsula and Umm Qasr. Depending how the fight went in that quarter, there was a chance—rather slim—that the 7<sup>th</sup> Armoured Brigade might not have the support of its affiliated artillery regiment when the RIP in RCT-7's zone occurred. In that case, the Americans would leave a general support artillery battalion and counterbattery radar behind to continue to engage enemy artillery in the Al Basra area under the tactical command of the British division. This was offered in good faith, since the Marines could not hand over the counterbattery fight if the 1<sup>st</sup> UK Division lacked a capability to match whatever indirect fire threat remained in Az Zubayr and Al Basrah. Teamwork between the two divisions was so strong that neither would consider any activity that did not work to the benefit of the other. The two divisions shared remarkably similar perspectives on almost every issue, and mutual admiration and trust were the order of the day.

On the other hand, the British fire supporters had indicated from the beginning that they were eager to attach the light gun batteries of 7<sup>th</sup> Para Royal Horse Artillery (7 RHA) to the US for the Opening Gambit. They explained that 16<sup>th</sup> Air Assault Brigade would not be committed until the RIP, and artillery should not be kept in reserve. In a first meeting between the two artillery commanders, Brigadier Gregory confirmed this intention to Colonel Marletto, even though there

was some question at the time whether London would permit cross-attachment of units below the brigade level. From the standpoint of facilitating the RIP, however, attaching 7 RHA to the 2<sup>d</sup> Battalion, 11<sup>th</sup> Marines (2/11) made sense, especially if it came with the British weapons locating radar. If the plan was approved, 16<sup>th</sup> Air Assault Battalion's affiliated artillery regiment would already be in place when it came up to relieve RCT-5, and the British radar—having been integrated into the counterbattery fight—would have built up its target lists and situational awareness.

The US planners coveted 3 RHA's self-propelled AS-90s with their long-range ammunition. In the end, the timeline for G-day would slip enough to prevent all four of 3 RHA's batteries from arriving in time for the fight. Thus, the 3d Battalion, 11<sup>th</sup> Marines (3/11) would cross the Line of Departure (LD) with only two batteries of the AS-90s attached, while 2/11 was reinforced by two batteries of light guns. As 3 RHA's remaining batteries were freed from the fight on Al Faw and Umm Qasr, they would move up to join the British command element with 3/11. This would get the 1<sup>st</sup> UK Division's artillery and radar into position—and into the fight—ahead of the British maneuver brigades, allowing the RIP to proceed seamlessly from the standpoint of fire support. Meanwhile, the American artillery would be free to lean toward the Division's upcoming fight in the west. Sierra Battery 5/11, with the 15<sup>th</sup> MEU, would support 3<sup>d</sup> Commando's assault on the Al Faw Peninsula from Bubiyan Island. Collaboration between Marine artillerymen and Brit gunners would be a hallmark of the Coalition under I MEF.

### **Intelligence Planning**

The G-2 continued to spend a great deal of time and effort negotiating the composition, command relationships, and force flow requirements of supporting intelligence attachments. What the Division was attempting to create (through the attachment of supporting intelligence capabilities) was a full complement of systems, all directly responsive to Division influence. This included secure communications, topographic systems, and a host of 'INT's (Intelligence specialties such as Signals, Imagery, and Human intelligence, SIGINT, IMINT, and HUMINT, respectively.) Through these systems, the Division would be self-sufficient enough to satisfy its own intelligence needs through organic collections while remaining plugged-in to the higher intelligence architecture. This proved to be a tremendous success, as the Division relied on its own intelligence gathering, analysis, and dissemination during most of the fast-paced operations that were to follow.



*The Trojan Spirit II special communications system provided critical access to Intelligence products to each RCT and the Division CP.*

The Division's five deployable Trojan Spirit II (TS II) satellite data communications systems provided critical secure connectivity to each RCT, enabling instant access to all supporting intelligence information from anywhere on the battlefield. Against a host of obstacles, I MEF's

Intelligence Systems Officer, Major Mike Scheiern, had fought successfully for the assignment of TS IIs down to the RCT level. The planned fast-paced maneuver of the RCTs made a fast moving, flexible secure communications system like the TS II an important requirement. The Division's allowance, however, was for a single TSII, and there were not many in the Marine Corps. With key support from 1<sup>st</sup> Radio Battalion, I MEF crafted a TS II distribution plan that borrowed assets from 1<sup>st</sup> Radio Battalion, 3<sup>d</sup> MAW, MARCENT, and 2<sup>d</sup> Radio Battalion. Pushing digital data to the RCTs at up to Top Secret (TS) and special classification levels was required, and the Trojan Spirits would be critical as both a data and voice capability during the fight. For SIGINT, the Division had the collection capabilities of nine attached SIGINT Support Teams, three Mobile Electronic Warfare Support System (MEWSS) vehicles (LAV-mounted SIGINT collectors) and four Operational Control Elements that provided connectivity and analysis for Theater and National SIGINT collectors. For imagery, the Division could reach back through the SIPRNET to archived imagery located in Imagery Product Libraries at CENTCOM, CFACC, CFLCC, and the 1<sup>st</sup> Intelligence Battalion. With its two organic imagery interpreters, the Division also had a minimal capability to do U2 wet-film exploitation using a deployable field light table. Additionally, the Division had direct feed of both Predator and Pioneer video downlinks through the Global Broadcast System (GBS) at Division Headquarters, and three Remote Receive Terminals (RRTs) from the VMU squadrons. Communications with the UAV pilots and mission planners was typically conducted via SIPRNET chatroom, supplemented by formal post-mission reports from the UAV squadron. The Division would have seven attached Human Intelligence Exploitation Teams (HETs) providing interrogator and translator support, as well as a small control element at the Division Headquarters. Because of the limited utility of the Marine Corps' obsolete unattended ground sensor equipment, the Division had no sensor support for this operation. The Division's own organic MOS 0261 Topographic Marines and equipment provided critical topographic support.

Arranging for this wide array of systems from a variety of supporting units proved exceedingly difficult, as each supporting attachment had to be individually sought-out, negotiated, or coordinated. Each supporting unit seemed to have unique command and control relationships, making their integration a challenge. Major Scheiern, working with the Division's Major Tim Oliver, enabled the Division to get the assets it needed to be self-sufficient. His assistance in pushing these assets even further down to the RCTs also had an exceptional impact. It became clear in subsequent operations that having intelligence support organic or under tactical control of the Division was critical, as intelligence support by a centralized higher headquarters became very tenuous once combat operations began. The Division demonstrated the requirement for an integrated organic UAV capability, access to theater and national imagery collections, SIGINT reporting, HUMINT reporting, local 3-D battlespace visualization capability, and access to the analysis products of higher headquarters through a high-speed circuit such as the Trojan Spirit.

Sensitive Site Exploitation (SSE) was to prove another significant preparation effort. The national intelligence community had identified a multi-tiered listing of potential hide-sites for chemical, biological, nuclear, or missile activity. These listings included sites that ranged from active research centers to sites of possible historical storage of prohibited items as far back as the Iran-Iraq war. A separate listing of potential war-crime evidence, mass graves, or leadership locations was also developed. CFLCC had established an exploitation methodology that





*Division riders join the crew of this P3-AIP aircraft to conduct battlefield surveillance and reconnaissance during the build-up phase of the operation.*

included Mobile Exploitation Teams of experts that could properly investigate and exploit a sensitive site. The Division G-2 worked to identify and prepare objective folders on the sites in zone that were most likely to contain WMD-related materials.

The Division enjoyed the support of an additional intelligence collection capability beginning in December 2002. The P-3 aircraft was being used in a surveillance role of maritime targets adjacent to and inside the Division zone. The P-3 Anti-surface warfare Improvement Program P-3 (AIP) had fitted the aircraft with sensors that were tremendously helpful in giving commanders situational awareness of their battlespace. Many of the Division staff had recent experience with the P-3 (AIP) in Afghanistan as part of Task Force 58. Exploiting the lessons learned from that recent experience, a program of Division riders on the P-3 aircraft was begun. Coordination with the squadron to utilize Al Jaber or Ali al Salem (AAS) in Kuwait allowed for them to pick up Division riders in country and observe targets of interest to the Division while flying routes that supported the P-3's primarily naval mission. Thanks to Major General Amos' support, ramp space and other 3d MAW support to the P-3s was forthcoming at AAS. The Division liaisons worked directly with the Commander of Combined Task Force 57 elements operating out of Bahrain. CTF-57 and the VP squadrons in Bahrain were to prove essential partners in the success of this program. The teamwork extended to such an extent that the CTF-57 arranged for the basing of a large P-3 detachment at Ali al Salem Air Base in Kuwait to more readily support the Division. This forward basing gave the aircraft tremendous loiter time over the target areas. The Division rider team, under Colonel Jim Lukeman, served as 'Guardian Angels' for Division forces moving to contact, providing critical indications and warnings to maneuver commanders in real time. The value of this aircraft as a collection platform in support of Marine operations was clearly demonstrated as ground operations pushed beyond the littoral area. The P-3 was able to push ever deeper into Iraq to provide day or night coverage for the GCE. To some extent, the Division suffered from the success of the P-3 as a surveillance platform and its Division rider program. As word of the capabilities of this platform began to get out, competition for access increased. The 1<sup>st</sup> UK Division, NSW elements, Force Reconnaissance, and even the Army's 3<sup>d</sup> Infantry Division all vied for the attention of a limited number of aircraft and crew. In another example of superb cooperation among the units making up the Coalition, the asset was shared by all, and soon teams of riders were aloft every time the P-3 was available. Throughout, the initiative and commitment of the Sailors of CTF-57 under Commander Robert Lally were commendable and in the finest traditions of the Navy-Marine team. Vice Admiral Keating, the

Coalition Forces Maritime Component Commander (CFMCC) provided his total support, enabling this critical combat multiplier to make its influence felt. The P-3's technical capabilities, coupled with Colonel Lukeman's intimate knowledge of the Division's scheme of maneuver, was a confidence-building combination that increased the speed of tactical decision-making and maneuver against the enemy.

With the Division's expected tasking to attack up the Highway 7 corridor, the Division G-2 requested high-volume production of detailed urban IPB products for the small towns along Route 7. These requirements were negotiated with the MEF's Intelligence Battalion. Noting the lack of a comprehensive map-based obstacle overlay product for the opening attacks, the Division G-2 also initiated action to develop a comprehensive map product that included pipelines, power lines, oil wells, and agricultural areas. In a strong display of support, CFLCC quickly adopted this product development effort as their own, and developed a complete 'Attack Corridor Study.' The 'Attack Corridor Study' was eventually to prove one of the most useful and highly desired intelligence products for the entire operation.



*A 3<sup>d</sup> MAF F/A-18D with an ATARS imagery pod installed. This aircraft provided imagery in support of the MEF's targeting effort.*

Third MAF had also recently received the imagery pods of the Advanced Tactical Air Reconnaissance System (ATARS). This imagery system was fitted into the F/A-18D to provide a tactical photoreconnaissance capability, one that had been lacking in the Marine Corps since the retirement of the RF-4B. The G-2 began to integrate ATARS imagery collection into the Division's intelligence architecture. Because of the very recent fielding of this capability to 3d MAF, the promise and capabilities of this platform were not fully realized due to a number of platform, data connectivity, and exploitation constraints. Because of the multi-role nature of the F/A-18D, every ATARS photoreconnaissance mission came at the expense of a deep strike, FAC (A), or CAS sortie. Achieving intelligence collection coverage of GCE maneuver and Intelligence targets required cost/benefit analysis within the MEF. Many ATARS sorties were also required to support 3<sup>d</sup> MAF targeting assessment. Noone appreciated 3<sup>d</sup> MAF's targeting efforts more than the grunts in the Division, but this left very few sorties to collect intelligence to meet Division requirements. A number of the remaining sorties were passed up to the CFACC for tasking, forcing the Division to compete within the larger Coalition environment to receive ATARS support from assets organic to the MEF. Few targets of primary interest to the GCE were exploited and disseminated, but the future potential for this platform was clearly demonstrated.

On 13 January, the Division attached an eight-man Joint Surveillance and Target Acquisition Radar System (JSTARS) Common Ground Station (CGS) team from the Army's 513<sup>th</sup> Military Intelligence Brigade. These soldiers, led by Staff Sergeant Adrian Flores, were to have a

significant impact on the Division's combat operations, and were a welcome addition to the Division team. The CGS maintained data connectivity with an airborne sensor platform, and provided real-time Moving Target Indicators (MTIs) and Synthetic Aperture Radar imagery directly to the Division G-2. This data would be used at critical junctures of planning and combat operations to determine trafficability of routes, detect condition of key bridges, analyze terrain to find mobility corridors, and detect large unit movements. From the outset, Staff Sergeant Flores and his team proved they possessed the same fighting spirit and can-do attitude of the Marines they were supporting. These soldiers would serve with distinction through the entire campaign, and would be commended by the Division CG after the fighting was over.

### **Visit By the Red Cell**

On 21 January, I MEF provided the Division staff the opportunity to sit down with an MCIA-sponsored 'Red Cell', led by Colonel Dave Larson. The Red Cell team combined Iraq experts from across the Intelligence Community and brought them to Kuwait to review the Division's plan from the enemy's perspective. The Division Forward Staff had the opportunity to discuss the capabilities of the enemy with this team, and gained significant understanding of the nature of the Regime and the capabilities they would likely employ on the battlefield. The Red Cell's review of the Division Scheme of Maneuver contained no significant surprises. The Red Cell noted the likely Iraqi use of humanitarian disaster, tactical inundation, and an urban-centric defense by conventional and paramilitary forces. The picture they painted was of a highly capable and increasingly challenging enemy as the Division advanced closer to Baghdad. According to the Red Cell, this enemy would allegedly use integrated fires, flooding, and chemical weapons to add to the challenges already posed by the difficult terrain. This reinforced the Division's expectation for a tough conventional fight, especially closer to Baghdad.

The Red Cell and the Division staff agreed that an asymmetric defense would be the Regime's best strategy, and their most likely recourse. Paramilitary forces, non-traditional defenses in the urban areas, a 'scorched earth' policy beginning with the Rumaylah oilfields and the use of chemical weapons might each be attempted. The group noted that isolated attacks could probably not be stopped, but the Regime would have a difficult time sustaining a coordinated asymmetric defense. Sustaining such an effort would require a well-trained force and sophisticated orchestration of effort, capabilities that the Iraqis did not have. The Division's 'No better friend, no worse enemy' policy would also seek to remove the motivation for resistance once segments of the population came under Division control.

Iraqi units were infiltrated and controlled by Regime overseers, and would not likely capitulate or surrender before US forces were closing on their positions on the ground. For the Iraqi soldiers, it was only when the balance of fear shifted from what the SSO would do to them to what the firepower of the Americans might do to them that surrender became an option. This same concept of a 'tipping point' with the civilian population was also discussed. The US had not intervened when the Shias rose against Saddam in 1991, and thousands were murdered by the Regime. Even though the Iraqi populace was vehemently anti-Regime, they were not likely to begin to aid the Coalition attack until it was clear that the US was committed to absolute Regime removal on the ground, and had the upper hand.

One final topic of discussion was the personality of Saddam Hussein. Saddam had kept himself in power by keeping his options open, then making brash decisions when he felt cornered or thought he saw an opportunity. The early use of chemicals would remove his flexibility. Saddam would likely recognize his inability to mass chemical fires for an 'area denial' effect, making them most effective as a weapon of terror. On the world stage given to Saddam by the international media, the *threatened* escalation to the use of chemical weapons was probably as effective as the weapons themselves. On the battlefield, these weapons would have limited effectiveness against well-trained US Marines. The Division G-2's line of reasoning led to the assessment that it was unlikely that Saddam would use chemical weapons in the opening days of the fight. This was contrary to some other assessments that predicted the use of chemical weapons 'early and often'. Regardless of the assessment, prudence would dictate that the 1<sup>st</sup> Marine Division be on guard against this eventuality throughout the campaign.



*The unstable personality of Iraq's dictator Saddam Hussein made it difficult to predict his actions.*

### **Teaming with the 1<sup>st</sup> UK Armoured Division**

One of the rewarding opportunities of the Operation was the close linkage between the 1<sup>st</sup> UK Division and the 1<sup>st</sup> Marine Division. The 1<sup>st</sup> UK Division, led by Major General Robin Brimms, had a shared understanding with the Division about what tasks existed, and the general order to complete them. Major General Brimms preferred not to push fragments of his combat power into the fight piecemeal under the Marine Division control. Rather, 1<sup>st</sup> UK Division planned to keep them ready to relieve the Division as rapidly and coherently as possible. This would enable the Marine Division to quickly disperse to the west, allowing not only preserved momentum and speed, but also a reduced chemical target. The Marine Division CG agreed fully with this concept. The Brits sent over one of their finest officers, Major John Brookings as a liaison to the 1<sup>st</sup> Marine Division CP. The quick-witted Major Brookings, with true Marine-like irreverence and humor, soon made himself a welcome and valued member of the Division team. At the Division's regimental command posts Major Andrew Flay (UK 7<sup>th</sup> Armour Brigade) joined RCT-7, Major Cameron Day (Royal Artillery) joined 11<sup>th</sup> Marines, and Major Frasier (16<sup>th</sup> UK Air Assault Brigade) joined RCT-5.

The Brits planned to have 3 Commando (with the US 15<sup>th</sup> MEU TACON) operating on the Al Faw peninsula, the 7<sup>th</sup> Armoured Brigade relieving RCT-7 in the Zubayr area, and the 16<sup>th</sup> Air Assault Brigade relieving RCT-5 in the Rumaylah area. Because UK forces were deploying to Kuwait on their own timeline, during planning there was little certainty about what the 1<sup>st</sup> UK Division would consist of when it actually came time for a RIP to be conducted. In fact, forces would still be flowing into Theater when the Division crossed the Line of Departure. A possible problem might arise if most of the 'Desert Rats' of the UK 7<sup>th</sup> Armoured Brigade were not



available to relieve the Division in time. In this case, the Marine Division would have to destroy all vestiges of the 51<sup>st</sup> Mechanized Division and close off all the bridges over the Shatt al Basrah waterway. These were tasks that the Division would have otherwise handed off to the 7<sup>th</sup> Armoured Brigade once the South Rumaylah oil field infrastructure was secure. As it turned out, the Desert Rats would be sufficiently closed to commence the RIP on schedule within 24 hours of the Marines crossing LD, even attacking in concert near Umm Qasr, and handily finishing off those elements of the 51<sup>st</sup> Mechanized Division that the Division left undestroyed.

### **Coordination with the Kuwaiti Land Forces**

The Division also began coordination with the Kuwaitis soon after the arrival of the Forward CP. Colonel Toolan made contact with the Kuwaiti Ministry of Defense (KMOD), Kuwait Land Forces (KLF) and the Office of Military Cooperation-Kuwait (OMC-K) to discuss cross obstacle breaching, maneuver training areas, terrain walks of the border area, and potential pre-assault preparation tasks. These early discussions set the tone for follow on planning and set the Division up for success during future combat operations. Major Clark Watson served as the Division's liaison to the KLF 35<sup>th</sup> Brigade. In between dinners of fresh lamb and cold drinks, he was to play an important role (Major Watson took a good deal of ribbing from his Division comrades, subsisting on Meals Ready to Eat (MREs).) His efforts were instrumental in the working relationship that was established with the KLF, and led to a mutual understanding of the Division's desires and movement plans while in Kuwait.

In order for the Division to occupy Attack Positions near the border, it was necessary to conduct a Forward Passage of Lines (FPOL) with the two Kuwaiti Brigades that had responsibility for border security in the Division's zone. The Kuwaiti Land Forces, especially the 6<sup>th</sup> and 35<sup>th</sup> Brigades were proud units, who wanted to assist the Americans and carry out their missions as full partners. The Division understood the strong national pride of the Kuwaiti people, and worked eagerly with the KLF to find ways to achieve the mutual goal of a rapid and safe FPOL.

The breaching of the Kuwaiti border obstacles became a central topic of discussion between the KLF and the Division. The Division requested that the Kuwaiti allies create twelve 300 - 500 meter lanes through the southern and northern obstacle belts. After coordination between CFLCC and the KMOD, the Kuwaitis hired a contractor to do the job. A Kuwaiti contractor diminished all border obstacles along the Kuwait-Iraq border in 1<sup>st</sup> Marine Division's zone, including the Southern berm and tank ditch, an electrified wire obstacle, and a northern berm and ditch. The Kuwaiti contractor opened all lanes in the southern berm obstacle by creating a hole in the berm and filling/compacting the ditch. The contractor made lanes in the wire obstacle at the breach sites by pre-cutting and preparing the fence. This method left the fence in place, with the appearance of being intact, yet the Marines would be able to easily open the fence by hand when the time came. The Kuwaiti contractor opened the northern berm and ditch obstacles in the same manner as the southern set.

The biggest impediment to early opening of the berm lanes by the Kuwaitis was the late closure of our forces and the danger of alarming the Iraqis who could observe the berm cut locations from their Observation Posts on *Jabal Sanam*. If they reacted to the berm cuts by

commencing destruction of the oilfields before the Division had sufficient forces to attack, the key oil infrastructure could be lost.

### **Major Hassan – A Combat Multiplier**



*Major Hassan - Senior Kuwaiti Liaison Officer to the UN Border observer mission and to Coalition forces. He was to play a key role in building the Division's situational awareness prior to the start of combat operations.*



Few individuals had a greater impact on the success of the Division's preparations than Major Hassan of the Kuwaiti Ministry of the Interior. This imposing figure had worked the murderous Kuwait/Iraq border area for over a decade, and was one of the most knowledgeable advisors the Division was to gain. Major Hassan was introduced to the Division Commander as a Kuwaiti Border Guard officer, who could discuss the activities of the Iraqis, Kuwaitis, and the UN along the border. It soon became clear that Major Hassan had tremendous insight into the situation along the border area. With a charming personality and an unveiled passion to assist the Marines in taking out the Saddam Regime, he soon was considered a friend by many members of the Division. Over the course of months, Major Hassan was to provide access to sensitive border areas to enable the Division's attack route planning and leader's reconnaissance. He provided key intelligence of Iraqi patterns of activity in the border area, and described the plight of the poor Iraqi people oppressed in southern Iraq. With Major Hassan as a guide, many of the Division's commanders and key staff members got a close look at the border obstacles, and routes that would take them the initial steps in the march to remove Saddam. Major Hassan proved a true friend of the 1<sup>st</sup> Marine Division, and an

important agent for the liberation of the Iraqi people. In August 2003, he received a commendation from the Division CG for his invaluable advice and coordination. More importantly, he earned the fondness and respect of the Marines who served alongside him.

### **Force Protection and the Atmosphere in Kuwait**

Even in the friendly country of Kuwait, the Marines maintained a very strong force protection posture. The Division Marines were tough, and already tough to kill. If terrorist

elements were to infiltrate into Kuwait and attack the Division prior to crossing the Line of Departure, they would have to get past a series of alert Marine sentries and Guardian Angels with weapons ready.

The vast majority of Kuwaitis were supportive of the US presence in their country and understood the mission and the reasons for it. The entire Middle East region, however, retained political, religious, and anti-western discontent for a vocal and violent few, largely focused on the Israel-Palestine issue. US forces in the region were a naturally high-profile target for these groups, and the Division continued to present a hard-target for terrorists.

There were a number of incidents that influenced the Division's careful approach to force protection. Even before the arrival of the Division Forward CP in Kuwait, one Division Marine, Corporal Antonio J. Sledd from Battalion Landing Team 3/1 (3<sup>d</sup> Battalion, 1<sup>st</sup> Marines) was killed, and another wounded, by a terrorist attack. This attack occurred during an 11<sup>th</sup> Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU) training exercise on Fayhlaka Island, Kuwait. The incident brought to light the critical importance of Force Protection while deployed in Theater, and reminded Division Marines of the importance of having Guardian Angels even while operating in an allied country. Although difficult to see at the time of his death, Corporal Sledd's sacrifice would have a significant impact on setting the conditions for keeping his fellow Marines alive during Operation Iraqi Freedom. Another contemporary incident in theater involved soldiers from the 101<sup>st</sup> Airborne Division arriving in Kandahar, Afghanistan on strategic lift aircraft. Because the soldiers were not permitted to carry ammunition on the military aircraft, they were left defenseless when they came under fire upon arrival. The Division raised these concerns to higher headquarters, and insisted that Marines deploying into this elevated force protection risk area must be equipped to defend themselves. With CFLCC's assistance, travel regulations were modified to allow the Marines of the Division to travel with their T/O weapons and self-protection ammunition, including on civilian contracted carriers.

Incidents continued after the Marines arrived in Kuwait. Another shooting incident involving two US Army soldiers and a deranged Kuwaiti policeman occurred in November, and two US civilian contractors were killed near the entrance to Camp Doha in January. These incidents justified the Division's alert policy of multiple vehicle convoys with armed Marines for all travel. Convoy drills, immediate action drills, and counter ambush techniques were rehearsed by all Division Marines.

In addition to the number of isolated shooting incidents, there were other suspected terrorists incidents. The Iraqi Intelligence Services (IIS) were known to attempt operations in Kuwait. In February it was discovered that the IIS had aggressively solicited food service workers of contract food providers as a possible way to introduce toxic or lethal diseases to large numbers of Marines. These incidents would give pause to advocates of cutting food service Marines, given the potential mischief to food supplies posed by contract workers with close access. Bomb threats were routine, and all vehicles entering Camp Commando and the TAA were carefully searched.

## **Logistics Planning and Rehearsal**

As units received weapons and vehicles from MPF shipping and their own equipment via strategic airlift, modifications and upgrades that began in garrison continued in the field. The Division Ordnance Readiness team, led by Major Greg Frich, was instrumental in working with USMC and theater agencies to source assets that enhanced both the Division's lethality and survivability. After establishing close liaison with the CFLCC at Camp Doha, Chief Warrant Officer Rod Fiene procured nearly 4,000 Combat Identification and Thermal Identification Panels (CIPs and TIPs, respectively) for the Division. Marines from 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>d</sup> Tank Battalions attached CIPs to their M1A1s to identify the tank and reduce the chances of fratricide. Remaining Division units attached TIPs to wheeled vehicles for the same purpose. Similar initiatives were pursued in the design, development, and installation of the Blue Force Tracker and Mobile Data Automated Communications Terminal (MDACT) systems. Working in collaboration with Major Thad Trapp of MARCORSYSCOM and the USMC weapons station in Crane, Indiana, Major Frich was responsible for coordinating the modification of the Division's Shoulder-launched Multi-purpose Assault Weapon (SMAW) systems. In total, technicians ruggedized the sighting systems of over 720 SMAWs to allow them to better withstand combat and to accommodate firing of the Novel Explosive (NE) round (a thermobaric blast warhead with tremendous explosive power.) On this and numerous other issues, the staff of MARCORSYSCOM worked tirelessly in support of the Division and its Marines, ceasing only when units moved to Dispersal Areas (DA), and Attack Positions (AP). From the earliest days of planning through the Division's movement into its final positions for the attack, MARCORSYSCOM's unstinting support was felt daily. The CG and staff of MARCORSYSCOM earned the Division's gratitude many times over.

With equipment on hand and modifications ongoing, providing the units with resources for training and combat was the next order of business. The meticulous and comprehensive planning efforts of Lieutenant Colonel Kiel Gentry, the 11<sup>th</sup> Marine Regiment S-4 Officer, and Captain Tim Collins, the Division Ammunition Officer would prove crucial to the artillery regiment and RCTs' success during combat. These Marines developed a plan that sequentially staged, drew and fired ammunition by lot number in order to provide the greatest accuracy for the Regiment's seventy-five M198 howitzers. Working with all of the Division's units and 1<sup>st</sup> FSSG ammunition technicians, the G-4 ammunition section designed and pre-staged numerous ammunition re-supply packages, each tailored to a particular mission.

The Division G-4 sourced Humanitarian Daily Rations (HDRs) and distributed two cases to each vehicle in the Division. At their discretion, commanders would distribute the HDRs to alleviate food shortages or as a demonstration of goodwill to Iraqis caught up in the war and in need. The Marines intended to give the Iraqi people an introduction to a different kind of army, one that bore no resemblance to Saddam's oppressors.

In keeping with the Commanding General's intent to be the most air-centric Division in history, and the CG, 3d MAW's intent to rapidly open Forward Arming and Refueling Points (FARPs) in the Division's wake, the G-4 initiated planning with Marine Wing Support Group -



37 (MWSG-37), commanded by Colonel Mike Anderson. The quick thinking planners at MWSG designed Rotary Wing FARP-opening packages designed to extend time on station of the Hueys and Cobras. The Division's G-4 Plans Officer, Lieutenant Colonel Jeff Moyer, and



*A logistics convoy moves across the open desert of northern Kuwait prior to the Division's movement to Dispersal Areas. Planning for logistics support over limited routes was a significant challenge to the Division's planners.*

the MWSG-37 Operations Officer, Lieutenant Colonel Fred Blish, worked to integrate these FARP packages into the tactical columns of the RCTs, allowing for quick set up and extending the reach of the Divisions air arm. FARPs would be placed as far forward as possible, primarily to provide fuel and ammunition to rotary wing aircraft flying in support of maneuver elements. As the Division continued to push further north toward Baghdad, extending the tenuous lines of communication to Kuwait, FARPs would take on the secondary mission of providing a node into which critical classes of supply could be flown.

### **CSSG Planning and Rehearsal**

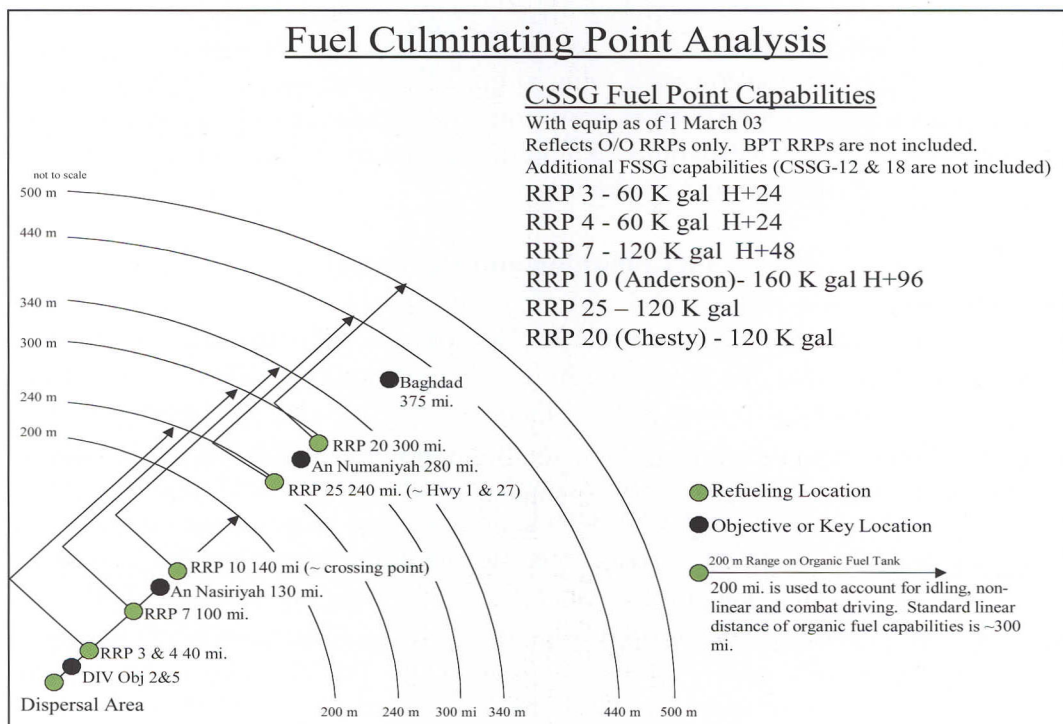
BSSG-1 officially became CSSG-11 on 10 December 2002, marking the initiation of an integrated CSS element within the Division. In less than one month CSSG-11 grew from a cadre planning staff of 32 Marines to over 1800. Planning and training continued to focus on the requirement for speed over the long distances necessary to sustain the 1<sup>st</sup> Marine Division. Detailed attention was given to the logistical footprint each CSSC would require to support their assigned RCT's. The CSSC's and CSSB-10's organization were designed with the correct equipment to support sustainment. Also, specific attention was given to calculating exact requirements and developing capabilities sets for each class of supply. CSSG-11's staff coordinated with each Battalion to develop re-supply blocks which included medical supplies, repair parts, battery blocks, ammunition, and emergency repair parts. This eliminated the requirement for a line-by-line supply request that consumed valuable time. The ammunition

technician's emergency re-supply packages were pre-built and pre-staged to fly in at a moments notice.

Working with the Division G-4, CSSG-11 developed a Logistic Tasking Order (LTO) to streamline the logistics request and tasking effort. The LTO was designed to take rapid requests, consolidate requirements, and then produce an order that would lead to mission accomplishment. To reduce the number of requests that had to be submitted by the battalions, the LTO took recurring requests such as food, chow, and water then automatically inserted the requests into the system. The LTO would be distributed to each of the CSSCs, the CSSB, and to Division G-4 to allow all units to know in advance where and when their supplies would arrive.

On 27 January, the CSSG-11 main body landed, hitting the deck running. They provided immediate CSS to RCT-7 and the Division headquarters within the first five days of arrival. An Ammunition Supply Point (ASP) was constructed immediately to receive, hold and distribute ammunition to Division units. The ASP ran around the clock up until a few days prior to crossing the border, making sure that there was no shortage of steel when the targets presented themselves.

Internally, CSSG-11 began intensive unit training for its over 1,800 Marines from 8 different USMC units, the USMC Reserves, the US Navy, and the US Army. The intensive training program culminated with an abbreviated Marine Corps Combat Readiness Evaluation (MCCRE) for each unit. The MCCRE scenario was designed to rehearse the first 96 hours of the war and focused on establishing and disestablishing RRP, convoy operations, night movements, actions on enemy contact, force protection, long range communications, and integration with supported units.



In Medical Services, the Forward Resuscitative Surgery System (FRSS), pioneered by Navy Captain H.R. Bohman and Lieutenant Commander T.R. Bilski, had come of age after initial conception in 1997. After limited use in Bright Star and in Afghanistan with TF-58, the full capabilities of the mobile surgical system were about to get the first major test in battle. Prior to departing CONUS, two FRSS teams spent a month at Los Angeles County Hospital (Navy Training Trauma Center) sharpening skills that would save lives in the months to come. After arriving in country with two full teams, the staff of the FRSS spent the month of February training medical augments and reservists to form an additional four teams. Over 200 hours of intensive training were devoted to lectures and hands-on training on new equipment. In addition, six Care Teams were trained to accompany critical medevac patients using ground and air transportation. Designed to provide initial life saving surgical care, the FRSS would become the most significant medical innovation to be validated during the war.

The role of CSSG-11, hastily formed and cutting new doctrinal ground, would be critical during the fighting. The habitual relationship between the CSSG elements and the Division it supported was to be a combat multiplier that connected the Marine Logistics Command effort in Kuwait to the Division's design to push deep and fast into Iraq. Its success was a testimonial to the vision of Brigadier General Ed Usher and Colonel J.J. Pomfret; and the commitment of their Marines and Sailors to support the 1<sup>st</sup> Marine Division.

### **Command and Control**

The first major effort for the G-6 was to negotiate the allocation of the Marine Expeditionary Brigade Command Element equipment on board the ships of MPSRON 1 and 2. The Division needed the unallocated gear (there were no MEB command elements) to provide redundant, long line communications over extended distances and multiple camps. The Deputy G-6, Lieutenant Colonel Brian Barton, attended the conference and was able to have 26 additional communications vehicles assigned to the Division, overcoming many of the most critical communications deficiencies. This war proved what the Division's communicators had known for years, that a Marine Division's peacetime equipment allowance would not support Division-level combat operations. The requirement to support multiple CPs, a Division Support Area, LSAs, CONUS-based forces, liaison officers, and other add-on communications requirements aggravated an already tenuous communications equipage and manning situation.

As communication requirements were refined, it was clear that the G-6 and the Headquarters Battalion's Communications Company manning levels were not adequate either. It was necessary to support the CG's Jump CP, Division Forward CP, Division Main CP, and the Division Support Area (DSA), while also having personnel support at Camp Pendleton to support reach-back capabilities. With the superb assistance of the G-1, the G-6 began the process of identifying reserve augmentation requirements, to include personnel and equipment support from the 4<sup>th</sup> Marine Division's Communications Company. Concurrently the process of requesting augmentation for some key specialty personnel was begun. Despite the G-1's constant efforts, it was not until 15 February that Major Tom Sobey was temporarily assigned to the Division as the data officer. Unfortunately, a data chief and technical controllers were never assigned. Had it not been for the last minute augmentation by the 4<sup>th</sup> Marine Division Communication Company's personnel and equipment, the Division communicators would not

have been able to support many of the Division's communications requirements in combat. As always, the Reserve Marines came through like champions once the system finally authorized their mobilization and deployment.

The Division received a number of new communications technologies just prior to deploying for combat. These systems, though appreciated, arrived at the Division with little training, logistics, or employment concepts. Some arrived only days before the Division crossed the Line of Departure, leaving barely enough time to find room on already packed vehicles, and scant time for integration.

The MDACT and the Army's Blue Force Tracker were two new technologies that provided Position Location Information (PLI). This was an operational assist in order to provide friendly 'blue' tracking on C2PC, which provided commanders a Common Operational Picture (COP). These two systems automatically provide 10-digit position information to the COP from vehicles with the equipment installed. The MDACT used the line of sight EPLRS radio for the communications path while the Blue Force Tracker was a satellite-based system that supported PLI without terrain or distance concerns. The Blue Force Tracker became the system of choice throughout the Division, not only for the PLI provided, but equally because it provided a capability to send pre-formatted and free text messages. Both systems were successful in finally allowing for real time automated input to the COP vice having the Division staff 'fat finger' the positions of friendly units based upon out-of-date unit position reports. The Division received and distributed 319 MDACT and 104 Blue Force Trackers. Installation of systems into the Division's vehicles and the training of Marines on both systems continued until the end of February.

The Global Broadcast System (GBS) was a receive-only satellite system that was fielded to the Division only one month prior to deploying from Camp Pendleton. This new capability allowed for receipt of CONUS-based cable network news services (CNN, and Fox News) as they broadcast, which meant that the Division could receive real time news services at its deployed



***Mobile Digital Automated Computer Terminal. This equipment was installed in vehicles throughout the Division to provide immediate position reporting of friendly forces as well as rapid transmission of free-text messages.***

location. This proved to be a good source of intelligence, and kept the Division's situational awareness high. The GBS was augmented with additional decryption equipment that allowed receipt of Predator UAV real time imagery. Two Division Marines were trained in the basic setup and operations of the GBS ground station equipment, but the Division required the augmentation of Corporal Nathan Dutton from 9<sup>th</sup> Communications Battalion to ensure that both the GBS and decryption equipment remained operational. As with all new systems that were pushed to the Division, the training of Marines to install, operate, and maintain it was key to ensuring the reliability of the equipment. Gaining the required expertise on these systems often fell to the motivation and intellect of the



individual Marine, as training opportunities were limited. Without the trained personnel borrowed from 9<sup>th</sup> Communications Battalion, GBS (and other new systems) would not have been such a success.

Use of commercial videophones and video teleconferencing suites became more the norm than the exception for both the Division Main and Forward CPs. Despite receiving the new equipment just prior to deploying, and having limited training opportunities, it functioned very well. The Voice Over Internet Protocol (VoIP) Phone was used far more than the video teleconferencing suite and provided reliable voice conferencing service for up to nine locations simultaneously. Since the VoIP phone transmission path was via dedicated SIPRNET bandwidth, it allowed for reliable connectivity over hundreds of miles in support of the geographically separated CPs, although at the expense of the rest of the users on the network. This new technology set a new standard for supporting commander and staff interaction.



*Commercial satellite telephones, like this Iridium phone, were a valuable addition to organic systems for tactical communications redundancy.*

For over a year prior to deploying, the Division G-6 had begun the process of procuring and activating Iridium phones for use throughout the Division. Initially the focus was to provide each Commander with an Iridium phone. With the flexibility and reliability of these phones it became apparent that many more were desired to provide an alternative means of voice communication throughout the Division. Starting with seventeen, the Division's appetite for Iridium phones grew until there were nearly 100 phones activated and supporting the Division. At a total cost of more than three hundred and fifty thousand dollars for these phones (to include the secure calling capability) this represented a significant investment in communications by commanders throughout the Division. The investment was well worth it when considering the successful use of these phones to prop-up the Division's aged tactical radio communications capabilities.

The CG directed the Division Information Management Officer, Lieutenant Colonel Norm Cooling, to eliminate all unnecessary reports required from subordinate commands and to streamline the remaining reporting requirements. To aid in this process, a web-based strategy was employed to increase the availability of information to all of the Division's units. In conjunction with the IMO, the G-6 Information Systems section led by Major Chris Nelson, 1<sup>st</sup> Lieutenant Spence Hanneman, and Staff Sergeant Bradley Hall developed a plan for the activation of the first ever deployed 1<sup>st</sup> Marine Division secure World Wide Web site. The efforts put forth to procure the necessary hardware, train personnel, and coordinate the communications connectivity at the DSA was instrumental to the Division's success in activating the site by 24 February.